

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00535 282054Z
ACTION ARA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
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AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 0535

FOR IOP/M, ILA

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION

1. TWO LOCAL NEWSPAPER OF FEBRUARY 25--
EXPRESS AND BOMB -- HAVE JOINED IN CRITICISM OF
UGANDA'S IDI AMIN AND REPORTED ACTS OF BRUTALITY
IN UGANDA. THE EXPRESS, A DAILY PUBLICATION,
IN ITS EDITORIAL TITLED "AMIN'S REIGN OF TERROR:
HOW LONG?", OBSERVES "FOR MUCH TOO LONG NOW
PRESIDENT IDI AMIN OF UGANDA HAS BEEN EXHIBITING
THE DOUBLE FACE OF INCREDIBLE FOLLY AND STAGGERING
BRUTALITY, BUT THE MOST RECENT EVENT IN HIS
COUNTRY SURELY DESTROY WHATEVER LITTLE RESPECT
COULD BE GRANTED HIM."

2. "THE KILLING OF THREE MEN OVER A WEEK AGO,"
THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES, "MUST PUT HIM (AMIN)
AND HIS GOVERNMENT BEYOND THE PALE. AND SINCE
AMIN IS THE GOVERNMENT HE CANNOT ESCAPE THE BLAME
FOR WHAT IS GOING ON."

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3. AFTER RECAPPING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING
THE DEATH OF THE ANGLICAN BISHOP AND 'OFFICIAL
REPORTS' ON EACH INCIDENT, THE EXPRESS EMPHASIZES
"WE CANNOT PRETEND TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE OFFICIAL
ACCOUNTS OF SUCH DEATHS. WHEN WE HAVE HEARD
GRUESOME DEATHS OF STUDENTS, OF DOZENS OF MURDERS
AND OF THE REIGN OF TERROR IN UGANDA CERTAIN THINGS

EMERGING FROM IDI AMIN COUNTRY COME WITH NO CREDIT RATING AT ALL."

4. THE EDITORIAL ALSO NOTES THAT AMIN IS HEAD OF A COMMONWEALTH COUNTRY "AND PRESUMABLY WILL BE INVITED ALONG WITH OUR PRIME MINISTER TO THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE LATER THIS YEAR." IT FURTHER POINTS OUT "THIS IS THE VERY MAN WHO WAS SO CLEARLY EXPOSED IN THE ENTEBBE INCIDENT, THE MAN WHO CALLOUSLY EXPELLED THOUSANDS OF ASIANS, WHO HAS PRESIDED OVER THE DEATHS OF MANY MORE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN." THE EDITORIAL DESCRIBES WHAT IS HAPPENING IN UGANDA AS "A DISGRACE TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY AS THE APARTHEID THAT DISFIGURES SOUTHERN AFRICA." THEN IT DECLARES "IF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES CAN SEE FIT TO EXERCISE SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA FOR BREACH OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY, WHAT ABOUT UGANDA?"

5. THE NEWSPAPER NOTES THAT NORMALLY ONE CANNOT TALK ABOUT INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY, "BUT THERE MUST BE SOME LIMIT BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TAKES NOTICE."

6. THE EDITORIAL EXPRESSES THE VIEW THAT IN THE END THE UGANDANS THEMSELVES HAVE TO SETTLE THEIR DESTINY, "BUT IN THE MEANTIME WE CANNOT PRETEND UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SITUATION IS ACCEPTABLE." IT SUGGESTS "THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS RESOLUTELY TURN AWAY OUR FACES FROM UGANDA AND ITS REPRESENTATIVES, AS SOME PEOPLE DO WITH CHILE AND SOUTH AFRICA."

7. IT CONCLUDES "DO NOT ADMIT THE MINIONS OF IDI AMIN TO INTERNATIONAL OR COMMONWEALTH COUNCILS. DO NOT ACCORD THEM THE RESPECT THEIR GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DESERVE. PERHAPS THEN THIS KNOWLEDGE MAY SPUR THE UGANDANS TO BRING FORTH A GOVERNMENT THAT IS MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THEMSELVES AND TO THE WORLD AT LARGE."

8. THE BOMB, A WIDELY CIRCULATED AND WELL-READ WEEKLY PUBLICATION, PUBLISHED A COLLECTION OF REPORTS FROM UGANDA IN A SIX-COLUMN ARTICLE HEADLINED "BIG DADA'S NEW BLOODBATH." IT BEGINS WITH THE OBSERVATION "REPORTS COMING OUT OF IDI AMIN'S UGANDA THIS WEEK INDICATE THAT ONCE AGAIN BIG DADA IS HAVING A BLOOD BATH AND NEITHER

PRIESTS, SOLDIERS NOR POLITICIANS ARE EXCLUDED."

9. IN A FURTHER COMMENT ON THE SITUATION, THE
BOMB NOTES "ONE THING IS CLEAR THAT ONCE A
POLITICIAN DECIDED TO LIVE BY THE SWORD, THE REST
IS INEVITABLE."

10. "NO COUNTRY," IT CONTINUES, "WHETHER IT BE
INDIA UNDER GHANDI, GUYANA UNDER BURNHAM OR UGANDA
UNDER AMIN WILL CONTINUE TO BE OPPRESSED BY A
TYRANT AND SO WE MUST FOLLOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN
UGANDA WITH INTEREST BECAUSE IT COULD HAPPEN EVEN
IN OUR MIDST."
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